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SUBJECT: PALESTINIANS RECEIVE LATEST EGYPTIAN FACTIONAL
RECONCILIATION PROPOSAL; REACT NEGATIVELY

Classified By: CG Daniel Rubinstein for Reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Abu Mazen received the latest Egyptian factional reconciliation proposal on September 9. The document calls for a "joint committee" with a broad but unclear mandate to oversee reconciliation before elections; allows for a delay in Palestinian elections until mid-2010; and proposes a separate committee with jurisdiction over security reform in both Gaza and the West Bank. PLO sources reacted negatively to the proposal, which they characterized as meeting Hamas halfway and having the potential to undermine Abu Mazen's prerogatives. The PLO Executive Committee plans to meet September 10 to formulate a response, which Abu Mazen will deliver to the GOE o/a September 12. End Summary.

Text of Latest GOE Proposal

¶2. (C) Presidential Spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh told Post that GOE officials presented Abu Mazen with the latest draft reconciliation agreement on September 9. Abu Rudeineh passed Post a copy of the paper, entitled "The Egyptian Vision for Ending the State of Palestinian Division." It opens with a lengthy summary of recent developments in the Cairo-based Fatah-Hamas reconciliation talks, followed by Egyptian bridging proposals on several key points of contention, including:

-- JOINT COMMITTEE: The document proposes the establishment of a "Joint Committee" to oversee implementation of the reconciliation agreement, to provide a "conducive atmosphere" for elections, and to pursue reconstruction in Gaza.

-- ELECTIONS: Simultaneous Palestinian National Council (PNC), legislative, and presidential elections would be held at a "mutually agreed date" in the first half of 2010, with the participation of all parties. Legislative elections would be held according to a mixed elections system, with 75% of seats filled on the basis of national slates and 25% through constituency-based elections in 16 districts (11 in the West Bank, 5 in Gaza). PNC elections would be held on the basis of full proportional representation in the West Bank and Gaza, and in the diaspora where possible.

-- SECURITY: The paper proposes that Abu Mazen issue a presidential decree forming a "High Security Committee" of qualified officers agreed to by both factions. The committee would serve as the implementing body for increased Egyptian and Arab support to the Palestinian security services. The paper also calls for the gradual re-mobilization of 3000 previously-fired or currently-boycotting Gaza-based PA police, National Security Forces, and civil defense officers.

-- PRISONERS: The paper calls for the GOE to collect lists of detainees from the PA and Hamas. Following verification of the lists, each faction would release detainees prior to

implementation of the reconciliation agreement, while providing Egypt with a list of any prisoners who cannot be released and a rationale for the decision.

Negative Reaction from PLO Contacts

13. (C) Abu Rudeineh said that Abu Mazen has "serious reservations" about the proposal. In a separate conversation with the CG, PLO Executive Committee (PLO/EC) General Secretary Yasir Abd Rabbo also reacted sharply to the text. "Frankly, it's awful," he said, adding, "the paper neglects all the fundamental political issues, and essentially accepts a compromise with Hamas' position on elections." Abd Rabbo said the language on elections was ambiguous, and could be interpreted as only requiring a decision on an election date during the first half of 2010, rather than elections themselves. He was equally critical of the paper's call for Abu Mazen to establish a joint security committee by executive decree, with responsibility for security sector reform in both Gaza and the West Bank. "This is crazy," he said, adding that the committee would effectively usurp Abu Mazen's authority as commander-in-chief. Extending the committee's mandate to the West Bank "will jeopardize all that we have achieved on security," Abd Rabbo said. Finally, the proposed "joint committee" in its current form would effectively supplant the PA government in the interim period before elections, he noted.

14. (C) "Why are the Egyptians doing this?" Abd Rabbo said rhetorically. "Hamas gets all that they want - postponement of elections, and participation in a joint committee which

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does not tie their hands," he added. Abd Rabbo also noted that, in their meeting in Cairo last week, Egyptian General Intelligence Director Omar Suleiman had encouraged Abu Mazen to issue a decree calling for new Palestinian elections by October 25, three months before elections, as required by Palestinian law. "Why remove this pressure from Hamas," Abd Rabbo said, adding that "we told (the Egyptians) we would be flexible on any issue except elections, which cannot be postponed, because the legitimacy of our political system depends on them."

15. (C) With regard to next steps, Abd Rabbo and Abu Rudeineh both said Abu Mazen planned to submit a response within two days, following discussion of the proposal at a planned September 10 meeting of the PLO/EC. He also noted that Egyptian Special Security Envoy Muhammad Ibrahim plans to visit Ramallah and Damascus soon to gauge the factions' reaction.

16. (C) Abd Rabbo predicted the PLO/EC would limit its formal response to the Egyptians to two items. First, "the date of elections is sacred," he said, adding, "if the Egyptians want to delay a month or two, fine, but we must set a new date at the same time." Second, the PLO/EC will ask to include a caveat that all security provisions must be in accordance with the Palestinian Basic Law, "since under the law, Abu Mazen is commander-in-chief, and he cannot cede this authority."

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